

# Fertility & Midwifery Care Center



## Health, Diet, and Weight in Pregnancy

### Supplements

#### *Recommended Supplements:*

- Prenatal vitamin with 600 mcg Folate every day
- Vitamin D3 5000 I.U. every day

#### **Why is vitamin D important during pregnancy and how much do I need daily?**

Vitamin D works with calcium to help the baby's bones and teeth develop. It also is essential for healthy skin and eyesight. It may also play an important role in decreasing anxiety and depression, especially seasonal depression. All women, including those who are pregnant, need at least 5000 I.U. of vitamin D3 a day. It is very difficult to absorb Vitamin D through foods. Exposure to sunlight also helps, but supplementation is the primary way to increase your levels.

#### **What is folic acid and how much do I need daily?**

Folic acid, also known as folate, is a B vitamin that is important for pregnant women. Before pregnancy and during pregnancy, you need at least 400 micrograms of folic acid daily to help prevent major birth defects of the baby's brain and spine called neural tube defects. It is hard to get the recommended amount of folic acid from food, so supplementation is recommended. For this reason, all pregnant women and all women who may become pregnant should take a daily vitamin supplement that contains folic acid.

#### **Why is iron important during pregnancy and how much do I need daily?**

Iron is used by your body to make Hemoglobin, a substance in red blood cells that carries oxygen to your organs and tissues. During pregnancy, you need extra iron—about double the amount that a non-pregnant woman needs. This extra iron helps your body make more blood to supply oxygen to your baby. The daily recommended dose of iron during pregnancy is 27 mg, which is found in most prenatal vitamin supplements. You can also eat iron-rich foods, including lean red meat, poultry, fish, dried beans and peas, iron-fortified cereals, and prune juice. Iron is absorbed more easily if iron-rich foods are eaten with vitamin C-rich foods, such as citrus fruits and tomatoes.

#### **Why is calcium important during pregnancy and how much do I need daily?**

Calcium is used to build your baby's bones and teeth. All women, including pregnant women, age 19 years and older should get 1,000 mg of calcium daily; those aged 14–18 years should get 1,300 mg daily. Milk and other dairy products, such as cheese and yogurt, are the best sources of calcium. If you have trouble digesting milk products, you can get calcium from other sources, such as broccoli, dark leafy greens, sardines, or a calcium supplement.

## Can caffeine in my diet affect my pregnancy?

Although there have been many studies describing an association between very large amounts of caffeine and pregnancy loss, the results are generally unclear. Most experts agree that consuming fewer than 200 mg of caffeine (one 12-ounce cup of coffee) per day during pregnancy is safe.

## What are the benefits of including fish and shellfish in my diet during pregnancy?

Omega-3 fatty acids are a type of fat found naturally in many kinds of fish. They may be important factors in your baby's brain development both before and after birth. To get the most benefits from omega-3 fatty acids, women should eat at least 1-3 servings of fish or shellfish (about 8-12 ounces) per week while pregnant or breastfeeding.

## What should I know about eating fish during pregnancy?

Some types of fish have higher levels of a metal called mercury than others. Mercury has been linked to birth defects. To limit your exposure to mercury, follow a few simple guidelines. Choose cooked fish and shellfish such as shrimp, salmon, catfish, and pollock. Do not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish. Limit white (albacore) tuna to 6 ounces a week. Avoid tilapia from China. You also should check advisories about fish caught in local waters.

<b>Best Choices</b> EAT 2 TO 3 SERVINGS A WEEK			OR	<b>Good Choices</b> EAT 1 SERVING A WEEK		
Anchovy	Herring	Scallop		Bluefish	Monkfish	Tilefish (Atlantic Ocean)
Atlantic croaker	Lobster, American and spiny	Shad		Buffalofish	Rockfish	Tuna, albacore/white tuna, canned and fresh/frozen
Atlantic mackerel	Mullet	Shrimp		Carp	Sablefish	Tuna, yellowfin
Black sea bass	Oyster	Skate		Chilean sea bass/Patagonian toothfish	Sheepshead	Weakfish/seatrout
Butterfish	Pacific chub mackerel	Smelt		Grouper	Snapper	White croaker/Pacific croaker
Catfish	Perch, freshwater and ocean	Sole		Hallibut	Spanish mackerel	
Clam	Pickrel	Squid		Mahi mahi/dolphinfish	Striped bass (ocean)	
Cod	Plaice	Tilapia		<b>Choices to Avoid</b> HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS		
Crab	Pollock	Trout, freshwater		King mackerel	Shark	Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)
Crawfish	Salmon	Tuna, canned light (includes skipjack)		Marlin	Swordfish	Tuna, bigeye
Flounder	Sardine	Whitefish		Orange roughy		
Haddock		Whiting				
Hake						

\*Some fish caught by family and friends, such as larger carp, catfish, trout and perch, are more likely to have fish advisories due to mercury or other contaminants. State advisories will tell you how often you can safely eat those fish.

## **How much weight should I gain during pregnancy?**

The amount of weight gain that is recommended depends on your health and your body mass index before you were pregnant. If you were a normal weight before pregnancy, gaining 20 to 35 pounds during pregnancy is appropriate. If you were underweight before pregnancy, in some cases you may need to gain up to 40 pounds. If you were overweight or obese before pregnancy, you should limit weight gain to 10 to 15 pounds.

## **How do I control my weight gain in pregnancy?**

These are a few thoughts to help you have slow, healthy, and appropriate weight gain in pregnancy. First, what you drink really matters. Consider drinks that contain no calories such as water and unsweetened tea or limited amounts of skim milk.

Many people don't want to, or are not able to count calories and that is fine. Focus on the portions of food on each plate. Increase the amount of protein you eat such as meat, dairy other than milk, nuts, and beans. Eat healthy vegetables including squash, green beans, and broccoli. Eat low sugar fruits such as apples, cantaloupe, berries, and melon. Do your best to eat only small amounts of high sugar carbohydrates such as bread, rice, pasta, potatoes, and french fries.

Keeping your blood sugar stable from meal to meal helps you to feel better, have less hunger, decreases cravings, and improves headaches and lightheadedness. The easy way to stabilize your blood sugar is to eat more protein and low sugar carbohydrates (see below) at each meal and avoid the high sugar choices listed above. Drink generous amounts of water throughout the day

## **What are the five food groups?**

1. Protein foods—Meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, avocado, eggs, processed soy products, nuts, and seeds
2. Dairy—Nut butters, milk, and products made from milk, such as cheese, yogurt, and ice cream.
3. Fruits—(Fresh, canned, or frozen) High sugar fruits include bananas, grapes, and watermelon. Low sugar fruits include berries and cantaloupe.
4. Vegetables—(Raw or cooked, frozen, or canned) High sugar vegetables include potatoes, corn, and peas. Low sugar vegetables include squash, green beans, and broccoli.
5. Grains—High in carbohydrates and therefore sugar. Bread, pasta, rice, oatmeal, cereal, and tortillas are all in the grains group

## **Can being overweight or obese affect my pregnancy?**

Overweight and obese women are at an increased risk of several pregnancy problems. These problems include gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia, preterm birth, and cesarean delivery. Babies of overweight and obese mothers also are at greater risk of certain problems, such as birth defects, macrosomia (overly large baby) with possible birth injury, and childhood obesity.